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ABSTRACT

The activities of the photography staff at three metropolitan newspapers were observed to identify those routines used in making photographic assignments, carrying them out, and selecting the best photographs for publication. Among the observations were the following: (1) assignments could originate from any "desk" or editorial department in the newspaper as well as from the picture desk; (2) matching photographers and assignments involves knowledge of photographers' work schedules, preferences, moods, and history of work; (3) each photographer develops a routine for entering a scene to take a picture, and most can easily describe the pattern they use--obsequious or pushy; (4) photographers usually look for a person or group that visually sums up what they consider to be the significance of the event; (5) when assignments are made, the picture editor knows which one is likely to produce the page one photo without seeing any photographs; (6) the photographer is usually the first one to look at the film and select the frames to print; (7) the photographs that will be on page one are the first the picture editor selects and "offers" to the editors who decide the content of the page; and (8) errors involving misinformation and those attributed to poor judgment are common to all newspapers, and their staff develop strategies for resolving those errors. The advocacy role of the picture desk and photography department--to develop an atmosphere in which photographers and their pictures are used well--is based on the belief that photography is a poorly understood yet powerful means of communication. (HTH)

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HOW PHOTOGRAPHS BECOME NEWS: PHOTOJOURNALISTS AT WORK

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News photographers are visual historians of the present. Their photographs are seen as documents, less mediated than any verbal account, of the events they have witnessed. Once edited and published, their work stands as a record, carrying the status of historical fact.

Yet, despite the presumed authority of the camera, photographs are made, not taken. A newspaper photograph, like any camera record, is the outcome of a complex set of activities. Tracing those activities, and the choices they imply, describes a recurring network of people and events that produce the photographs published in a daily newspaper. The people who create the assignments, the photographers who carry them out, and those who participate in the decisions of selection are taking part in a pattern of collective action that, far more than the subjects or the photographs, determines how the events are portrayed in the paper.

This study examines how that work gets done, within the organizational structure of the metropolitan daily newspaper. Of all the events that occur each day, how are the choices made to cover some in photographs? Of all the ways a photographer can document an event, what and how does he or she choose to photograph? Of all the photographs made on an assignment, how are the ones chosen for publication? The complexity of these choices suggests that the people who make them rely on routines to provide a pattern that guides their work. The picture editor and staff photographer are at the center of this daily process, and much of their work centers on the assignments covering scheduled events. This research focuses on the work of staff photographers and picture editors employed at three metropolitan newspapers as they create visual documents

of scheduled events each day. Using a variety of fieldwork techniques, the research identifies those routines used in 1) making assignments, 2) carrying them out, and 3) selecting the best photographs for publication.

The routines of these photographic activities, in addition to the "routine" or unproblematic execution of duties, include the need to solve problems and the desire to account for errors. The explanations staff photographers and picture editors make for the problems and errors that inevitably occur explains, too, their interpretation of their role within the news organization and their felt responsibility to newspaper readers. Relying on such accounts, this study examines the relationship between the routines of photojournalistic work and the photojournalists' interpretations of the organizational and societal impact of that work.

Theoretical Framework

In recent years, sociologists have been examining the journalism profession. Some of this research has focused on historical developments in the concept of news, to account for the rise of "objectivity" as a cultural phenomenon that continues to shape contemporary journalistic practice (Schiller, 1981; Schudson, 1978). Others have examined the strategies and conventions that reporters and editors employ as they attempt to "routinize the unexpected" in their work of deciding what is to be covered and how (Tuchman, 1972, 1973, 1978; Gans, 1979; Altheide, 1976). While important distinctions exist among the theoretical premises and methodological approaches in this literature, it converges in revealing various aspects of a central problem: journalistic practice is an interpretive process; criteria such as facticity, accuracy, and balance are socially and culturally derived; and these criteria are less central to the shaping of what we know as "news" than are the informal rules

and strategies that arise within the context of work. News, in other words, is revealed as a cultural form, created as journalists' judgments and values routinely shape and are constrained by social, economic, and political factors operating both in and out of the newsroom.

Despite important differences between words and pictures, photojournalism may be found to be constrained by some of the same or parallel processes that shape written news. Photography has also exerted its own influence on the culture of the newsroom. In the late nineteenth century, photography provided a model for the concept of objectivity that began to shape the reporting of news (Schiller, 1977). Insofar as photographs are considered within the news organization as providing a distinct type of "proof" that certain events occurred, they may serve as a check on the occasional reporter's tendency to "overwrite" an event, or may be published to support a newspaper's goals of credibility. The significance of photographs in establishing the editorial position of a newspaper has been explored by Hall (1973) and Barthes (1977), who extend their respective arguments to include a relationship between cultural concepts of photography and the ideology of news.

Beliefs about the "truth" of photography and its appropriateness as a news medium notwithstanding, studies of how photographs are constructed in non-journalistic contexts consistently contradict any assumption that photography is an instrinsically objective medium. The cultural expectations and personal values of the photographer and his or her perceptions of the audience shape the making and editing of any photographic record, whether for a family collection, for example (Chalfen, 1975), or intended as an historical document (Scherer, 1975). Even when phtographers' goals are shared and they are employed by the

same organization to document similar subjects, differences between their methods of work and the appearance of their photographs are distinct enough to establish that making photographs is an interpetive rather than objective process (Ohrn, 1980). Socialization into a profession and the social constraints of the work environment have been identified as factors that contribute to the shaping of photographic style, including that of the photojournalist (Rosenblum, 1978). Thus the tasks of matching photographers with assignments and editing the resulting photographs can be expected to exert an influence on a photojournalist's style, and certainly on the photographic style and content of a newspaper. Larger newspapers usually employ picture editors to carry out these tasks. The significance of these individuals in the collective activity of creating the daily newspaper has been ignored in the research of journalism and mass communication, even as other editors, as "gatekeepers," have been a major focus of research in the field. This study, entering the news organization through the picture desk and the photography department, thus addresses a neglected facet of the news organization, and by exploring its collective actions, attempts to account for photojournalism as socially constructed through the interrelated events, judgments, and choices made by staff photographers and picture editors.

Methodology

The newspapers chosen for this study are each noted for the high quality of their photography departments. They each have a large staff of photographers working out of the main office and several picture editors, and can count many regional and national awards for their work. These three staffs were selected for this research because of their comparable size and stature, in order to learn the patterns and routines

used by those recognized as among the best in the field.

Geographical variation and different organizational structures were also sought in the sample, to provide for comparison. The three newspapers are located on the West Coast, in the Southeast, and in the Midwest, each in metropolitan areas considered major for their respective parts of the country. One of the papers is an old family-owned business; the other two are owned by the same large newspaper chain. Two of the operations publish a morning and afternoon paper, each with its own picture editing staff, but sharing the photographers. The third, one of the two chain newspapers, publishes only a morning paper. Each newspaper is published in several metropolitan editions, and has other editions designed for different segments of their audience, to circulate to a neighboring state or county, for example, or to a Spanish-language population. The research focus for each paper was on members of the staff who work "downtown," excluding thereby those regularly employed to work in the "bureaus" or other regional offices.

These three staffs were also chosen because competition among them created possibilities for interpretive comparison. Because these newspapers compete in the hiring of photographers and picture editors, several staff members have been employed at more than one. This network phenomenon makes it possible to explore how staff members have adapted their professional values and practices to the different organizational structure, ideas about news photography, and geographical location of their current employer and staff. Because the sample includes photographers and editors who interpret their work in this comparative frame, the data are enriched from each newspaper and for the sample as a whole.

The research approach draws on the fieldwork methods applied by sociologists at the University of Chicago working in the tradition of community studies and studies of professions. Most relevant here is the work of Herbert Gans (1979). More recent work on the construction of news has relied on ethnomethodological approaches to investigate the interpretative procedures that underlie the strategies journalists employ (Tuchman, 1978). Ethnographic interviewing techniques, including tours of the work place, as developed by James Spradley (1979) and learned from Richard Horwitz (Horwitz and Ohrn), also inform the methodological procedures. The photographic documentation draws on the research and related interviewing techniques used by John Collier (1967).

The fieldwork began on each paper either by observing a staff photographer's work and tracing it through the picture desk, or by observing a picture editor as assignments were made and edited, then tracing the photographers who received the assignments. Eventually, both these strategies were followed on all three papers, to yield a more balanced perspective on the activities and interpretations of the staff. The fieldwork covered three continuous weeks with the staff of the first newspaper and five days with each of the others. Whenever possible, an entire shift was spent with one individual, and observation and interviewing continued on an informal basis outside of the routines of work. Observation, interviewing, and photographic documentation were focused on tracing those procedures that shape and define the photojournalists' and editors' work: where and how assignments originate, how assignments are made, how the photographers execute the assignments, what factors influence the selection and editing of photographs, and how these photographs are displayed in the newspaper. This involved tracing each of

these activities as they took place in the newspaper building, and also accompanying photographers as they carried out assignments. I accompanied eight photographers through twenty-five assignments, and observed portions of the editing and printing of approximately forty additional assignments by a total of seventeen photographers. I observed five picture editors through at least one complete shift each, and some editing and desk work by seven others, several of whom were photographers filling in on the picture desk.

Observations of the tasks of the editors and photographers included documenting photographically the newsroom, laboratory, and on-assignment activities, and asking questions about the reasons for the choices and selections the individuals were making. The photographic record, in the form of contact sheets, allowed for closer perusal of these activities, sometimes with other staff members providing additional interpretations. When an assignment was shot using black and white film, I obtained a copy of the photographer's contact sheets, and later asked the photographer to "talk through" them, to explain the choices of lenses, angle, subject, etc., he or she had made at the time. I also asked photographers and editors, separately, to evaluate the newspaper pages on which the photographs appeared. Formal tape-recorded interviews and informal on-the-job questioning provided chronological accounts of individual's education, professional training and career, interest in photography, and evaluation of the newspaper, the photography staff, and his or her self-assessment.

Numerous comparisons provided important keys to the existence of routines guiding the decision-making process. Similarities and differences I observed between the activities and rhythm of the news cycle

on the morning and afternoon paper were checked by asking photographers and editors familiar with both to offer their own comparisons. This pattern of inquiry was followed throughout the research: comparing different photographers working on similar assignments; comparing the same photographer executing a studio assignment, one of a scheduled event, and on "enterprise" (the see-what-you-can-find assignment); comparing the ways photographers worked when shooting color and black and white film; when photographs were being chosen for page one or for an inside page; for a street or home delivery edition; and so on. From these contrasts among various facets of their work and the photographers' and editors' evaluations of them, I obtained information about what was typical, that is, able to be tied together into a work routine, and what was unusual or problematic, thus requiring a new or less familiar solution from the photographer or editor.

By explaining myself as an educator and researcher who wished to learn how good photographs get into a newspaper, I received full cooperation from each staff. It is not unusual for a well-respected newspaper to host interns or other professional journalists for a few days, and my role appeared to fall into such a pattern. My questions and presence undoubtedly affected the activities and decisions I was observing; when asked, the subjects of the study acknowledged this was so and gave examples. Occasionally I was asked for my opinion or to help carry out some task. My cooperation with such requests simply provided me with additional data, for I could then ask, "Did I do it right?" and "How would you have done it?"

As I reviewed the data, seeking patterns in the process of work, I looked at the ways photographers and editors described the tasks they

did, any rules or guidelines they appeared to follow, and where they draw parameters of their own responsibilities and those of their co-workers. To whom did they feel accountable for their work, and what did they expect of those they worked with? When did they experience confusion or conflict over their expectations and responsibilities, and how did they try to resolve the issues that caused this professional dissonance?

In particular, I looked for patterns that were common to all three newspapers. The differences among them are significant, some of which may be explained by such factors as the ownership of the papers, a morning versus afternoon news cycle, contrasting middle- and upper-level management styles, or different assignment/photographer ratios. At this point in the research, however, more is to be served by identifying and analyzing the commonalities across members of the profession who share a relatively high status. To be able to describe the work patterns and attitudes of those who are among the most respected photojournalists and picture editors, as a group, is important to understanding newspaper journalism as a field. Thus the analysis attempts a composite view of the three newspapers I observed and their photographic staff.

Making Assignments

Assignments can originate from any "desk" or editorial department in the newspaper, or from the picture desk itself. Other desks are expected to inform the picture desk of upcoming assignments that might have "picture possibilities." For example, when one city desk failed to notify its picture desk that they were sending a reporter to cover a fireman's funeral, the picture editor spoke to the city editor about the problems this created for planning photographic coverage of

a significant news event: a photographer had to be pulled from another assignment, and barely arrived in time for the funeral.

Some editors are described as more "aggressive" in creating assignments than others because they talk to other editors about upcoming stories and plan photographs to accompany them. Picture editors also get assignment ideas by watching the calendar for holidays, special celebrations, and scheduled events, and by watching other news media's coverage. They are looking, they say, for ideas that will "make pictures," since some ideas are not intrinsically photographable, and for ideas that will give a local perspective on a national or international event. They often rely on the photographers for these ideas, considering them as their eyes in the city. Making an assignment involves getting information about a specific place or event to be photographed, and the name and telephone number of one or more "contacts" for the photographer. The editor may set up an appointment or leave that responsibility to the photographer.

Some events require major coverage, and more than one photographer will be assigned. These events range from having one photographer inside a funeral and a second positioned outside, to a complex coordination of four photographers and two editors each with carefully designated responsibilities and positions, to cover a professional football game (Figure 1). For newspapers that frequently publish color, an editor may assign one photographer to shoot color and a second to shoot black and white film of the same event, with the black and white photographs intended for the earlier editions of the paper. It is the editor's responsibility to coordinate this coverage, to inform photographers of the deadlines they must meet with their pictures, and to insure that

FIGURE 1.

DOLPHINS vs. PATRIOTS 1/9/83 Kickoff 4pm

	WALTHER --	Overhead. Shoot color where can. Get film down for police runs; come in and print own film.
Fans	O'BRYON --	Play the Dolphins deep from both the west end 30-second clock level, and the east end. Shoot all color if can.
Lightstand	GILBERT --	Shoot Pats' side. Action plus something on Pats coach Meyer. Cover Pats dressing room after game; watch for Lester Williams reunion with his family if it happens.
Pressbox	WALTERS --	Shoot Dolphin side. Action plus keep an eye on bench/Shula for reaction to turn of the game etc. If Dolphins lose, cover their dressing room.

NOTE: Everything is color except the dressing room stuff.

FILM RUNS: Halftime -- Police (Walther Jr. is backup).

End of game -- Police (O'Bryon is backup).

(Note: If game goes into overtime, the cop will leave after regulation time; we switch to BW and Everyone brings in own film).

DEADLINES: (For Color) -- 7pm -- To Engraving for Palm Beach edition

8:30 -- To Engraving for Broward edition

One picture goes 1A; the other to Sports.

INSIDE: Randy will soup color and help with conversions.
Walther will print own overheads.
O'Bryon will print own BW and help with conversions.
Walters and Gilbert will print conversions.

EDITORS: Bratager, Anger.

NOTES: We're looking for two color pictures --1A and Sports.
Sports also has 2 pages of space, so there is room for this game.
Let's be on the lookout for a 1A color picture that could be other than action -- any folo on the Snowplow incident, for instance. Somebody may bring a lawn mower, or dump a can of snow on the bench etc.
Generally, let's just stay alert for any happenings or unexpected turns. Pats' Lester Williams and Fred Marion played for UM; there may be something there.

all the facets judged necessary to good coverage of the event are specified. The editor types this information onto an assignment sheet. The photographer who receives it is likely to stop by the editor's desk or call in for any additional information, ideas, or expectations the editor may have about how the assignment is to be done.

The exception to the specificity of the daily assignment is "enterprise," the assignment which may be as general as photographing weather conditions or finding a good picture in a particular area for that region's edition. The photographer, within this loose framework, is expected to look for anything that will "make pictures," usually a feature photograph of an interesting looking person or a setting that has striking light or shapes for "good graphics." One photographer uses "enterprise" to look for spot news, however, by shifting his car radio among the bands for nearby police precinct stations and fire departments, with considerable success. Others will use "enterprise" as an opportunity to follow up on one of their own picture ideas or an in-depth "project" they have in progress. Photographers vary in their attitudes and approaches to "enterprising." For many, it is the least favorite assignment, and they consider it an indication that the picture editor is not doing his or her job.

Matching photographers and assignments is a delicate task, involving knowledge of photographers' work schedules and geographical locations, preferences, moods, and history of work. An assignment goes first to the photographer who is closest to its location, especially if it is one far from the newspaper building, or one which has to be covered immediately. In such cases, the photographer may receive the assignment over the radio from the picture desk.

Photographers each have strengths and weaknesses, and, in the interest of getting the best possible photographs, an editor will keep these in mind when giving assignments. A photographer known to be "good with children" or one who likes covering fires, for example, when possible will be given the assignments relevant to those abilities. The photographer's race and sex is pertinent for some assignments: a black photographer was assigned to the family of a black man whose murder had touched off a racial disturbance, for example, and a woman was assigned to cover a local conference for working women. The editors judged that these photographers would work less obtrusively in the settings, and hence were likely to return with better photographs than someone who was not of the same race or sex as the subjects. Similarly, a photographer who has special knowledge of an area or a subject would be the editor's first choice for an assignment relevant to the photographer's expertise. Occasionally, however, close knowledge of a subject may impede a photographer: in one case, a picture editor called a second photographer after the first, who happened to be conveniently near the police station, reminded her that he knew the family of the woman being brought in on a murder charge. Most editors also try to take into account when a photographer has shot a series of difficult or demanding assignments, and factors in their personal lives which may affect their professional abilities.

The most delicate aspect of making assignments is achieving a balance between publishing good pictures and giving each photographer a fair share of the "good" assignments. Differences among photographers' abilities frequently make this problematic. Editors are aware that if they always give the most important assignments to the best photographers,

the work of the poorer photographers will never improve or even decline, possibly making them ineffective members of the staff: editors try to keep their photographers from becoming "dead wood." Photographers, in turn, are status conscious, and tend to be very sensitive to who receives the special assignments that involve travel, for example, or the freedom from daily assignments to pursue a special "project," or a string of daily assignments that result in page one pictures or strong entries in picture contests. They consider good assignments their rewards for doing well, and bad assignments as punishment. One photographer, when handed an assignment he and the editor both recognized as another in a series of poor ones, asked "Have I done something wrong?" The editor, according to his or her chosen style of management, can use the cherished assignments as rewards to heighten competition among staff members, or to attempt to achieve a balanced variety of assignments for each staff photographer.

Despite considerable variation among staff, there is some consensus about what makes a daily assignment a good one. The most desirable, from the photographer's point of view, are those that are likely to result in page one publication, or, slightly less appealing, on the front of another section of the newspaper. Since most of these photographers enter regional and national contests, they also appreciate receiving assignments that might have the qualities of a contest winner. Another important criterion for many photographers is whether the subject is something they can "get their teeth into," a more complex or substantive topic that may require publishing several photographs for adequate coverage. This is the kind of assignment that might "make a page" of photographs, a full-page layout. Placement and number of photographs,

in other words, are the major criteria for establishing the significance of the photographer's work.

The most desirable assignments also tend to be of unusual subjects, something the photographer would rarely, if ever, have a chance to shoot. The choice subjects also tend to be those involving people with something visually striking or unusual about them that is closely tied to the reason they are being photographed. A few photographers, however, prefer subjects that appear very ordinary, enjoying the challenge of capturing on film subtle changes in expression or gesture. Similarly, preference for hard news versus feature assignments, for events that occur very quickly versus those that take more time to unfold, for "enterprise" versus tightly structured assignments, for subjects with striking "graphics" versus those with fast action--these and other assignment preferences vary with the photographer. A strong staff, and a fortunate picture editor, will have photographers who among them consider all assignments good ones, and are each striving to make page one pictures.

Doing Assignments

After receiving an assignment, a photographer is likely to ask the picture editor for information that is not on the assignment sheet, including where the picture is likely to appear in the paper. The photographer may also call and arrange to meet the contact person at the event. Often a photographer will ask the contact specific questions about the event and its location to help plan what equipment to take.

Based on these conversations, and any prior knowledge he or she has of the event, its participants, and its location, the photographer will usually have one or more specific types of photographs in mind, and will plan equipment to fit them. To cover a court hearing, a photo-

grapher took the Leica cameras required for shooting in the courtroom, but also kept her more flexible Nikons handy, because, she said, "The best shots usually happen right outside the courtroom." On a dark day, wanting to use available light, a photographer packed her 85mm. lens, because it was faster than the longer 180mm. lens she usually preferred. Planning ahead also includes packing back-up equipment, in case an assignment works out differently than anticipated. Nor is all the necessary equipment, strictly speaking, photographic: When an important assignment was to include a funeral procession of several hundred motorcyclists, the photographer wanted a high-angle view of the event, but knew there were no bridges over the street the procession would follow. He took a step ladder along, to give him some height, but then negotiated with one of the participants to ride on top of the van that would lead the procession. The photograph ran on page one the next morning.

Most photographers prefer to arrive at an event ahead of time. This gives them an opportunity to look over the physical environment, choose some spots to photograph from, and get information from other early arrivals (including other media personnel) about the schedule and key participants. For a photographer working close to the newspaper's deadline, getting photographs early is important. From prior experience, the photographer may know, too, that certain kinds of photographs can be taken before an event actually begins. It is easier, for example, to photograph people in a parade when they are lined up at the starting line, one photographer explained, because then he does not have to do so much walking backwards and can get identifying information more easily from the people he is photographing. Photographers try to make the most important photographs--those the editor has suggested or the necessary

"record" shot of the event--as soon as possible. They know then that they have "covered themselves," they say, so they then feel freer to explore the scene looking for better pictures, those that go beyond the minimum required for the assignment. They also look for photographic possibilities outside the range of the specific assignment. A photograph of the parade marshall, who is a well-known congresswoman, for example, may be useful later.

Each photographer develops a routine for entering a scene to take pictures, and most can easily describe the pattern they use. Some are obsequious, others are intentionally pushy. Some have learned to use an initial shyness with strangers as a way of appearing non-threatening or even bumbling, and thereby gain the cooperation of their subjects. One photographer stressed the importance of getting "eye contact" with people as soon as possible, but once established, using it carefully, "not so much that they'll include me." She acknowledged that one of her real skills is an ability "to go into situations and become part of the group and be ignored": she tends to work slowly, expecting the best pictures to happen for her after she has been there for a while. Other photographers prefer the freshness of their first impressions and like to work more quickly, then leave.

Photographers are usually looking for a person or group that visually sums up what they consider to be the significance of an event. A pair of cute little girls, one waving an American flag, the other with a Cuban banner, together made a picture symbolizing the intercultural festivity of a parade celebrating a Latin holiday. Assigned to a conference for working women, the photographer spent most of her time with a group that included women of different ages and races, hoping to make a photograph during their discussion to show this diversity. These

examples are typical of the kinds of pictures photographers anticipate before arriving at an event.

But most events include important or interesting angles the photographer could not have anticipated. When an elementary school was evacuated for a disaster drill, the photographer could not have known that the children would be standing in the school yard without their coats. The lines of children, huddled together with their teachers against the cold, became the most significant aspect of the event for this photographer, and resulted in front page pictures. Sometimes the press of time prevents the photographer from following up on the better picture ideas. In the course of carrying out a portrait assignment, one photographer learned that her subject, a woman newly appointed as director of a program to help families with drug problems, had bought used furniture and painted the signs herself. These activities, the photographer said, would have given a more interesting picture of the woman's activities than the desk portrait did, and would have conveyed more clearly that she was in a new job. However, the scheduling of the next assignment prevented the photographer from spending more than ten minutes with the woman. "You always learn on assignment what would make a better picture," the photographer said.

Identifying the people in their photographs is the responsibility of the photographer; the newspaper will not publish photographs that are not properly "i.d.-ed." Photographers develop different strategies for learning people's names and addresses. Most photographers, after taking the pictures, simply go up to the person, introduce themselves as being from the newspaper, and ask the person's name. This exchange is also considered the equivalent of getting a release from the person

to publish their photograph. A person may be too far away, however, or the photographer may be photographing groups of people, making it difficult to get names. In order to get the name of a flag-waving fan at a football game, one photographer sent a child up into the stands with paper and pencil. The photographer learned the names of the football players by getting a program, and matching names with the jersey numbers in her photographs. Two hours after photographing the school children at the disaster drill, the photographer returned to the school to get the names of the children appearing in the prints most likely to be published.

Learning a person's name is usually woven into a brief conversation with the subject, and serves as one of the many ways photographers establish the contact necessary to a cooperative relationship between themselves and the people they photograph. The photographers in this sample did not like to pose their subjects, nor did they want to ask people to recreate an activity. They often explained to people that they would like for them to continue to do what they were doing, as if they were not being photographed. Their goal was to make pictures that looked as if the photographers were not there. This meant not having people looking at the camera during an exposure or holding gestures in ways that would appear stiff in photographs. Meeting these criteria is a challenge, since most people are aware of a camera's presence and appear eager to cooperate with the authority represented in the news photographer. When working with young school children who were extremely excited about being photographed, one photographer finally said, "I won't take your picture if you look at me," and the children obeyed. Photographers also find that the longer they spend with people, the less aware they become of

the camera, and the more "natural" the photographs look.

Despite the general consensus that posed photographs are not natural perspectives of people, photographers vary widely in their willingness and ability to get people into the situations or activities they wish to photograph. Editors exert considerable influence on these practices for they, too, vary in their evaluation of photographs that appear posed or reveal that a subject was camera conscious. Portraits tend to break all rules against posing: even the photographer most opposed to "setting up pictures" took a direct portrait, to be certain that she had a good identifying photograph of the group of people central to the reporter's story. Studio photographs are also clearly arranged, and some photographers like working in the studio. In that setting they exert more control over their subjects without misleading readers that these photographs are other than posed "illustrations."

The practice of "setting up" pictures is a volatile issue, with practical, economic, and ethical overtones for photographers. One can usually work more quickly and shoot less film if willing to arrange a subject, but runs the risk of being accused of making "dishonest" pictures by other photographers and editors. One editor, recently hired, summed up some problems he was having adjusting to working with a new photography staff saying, "Here they don't take pictures; they make them." In practice and philosophy, the poles are clear, but between them lies a long and complex continuum of ways that all photographers do, in fact, arrange the people and scenes they photograph.

Editing Photographs

Page one establishes the character of a newspaper, combining formal news values and visual appearance. The photographs that will be on

"A1" are the first the picture editor selects and "offers" to the editors who decide the content of the page. The choices are made according to the pattern routinely used for that newspaper or edition. Each paper in this sample usually publishes one large photograph and one to three smaller ones. The large photograph on page one of morning newspapers is more likely to be of a significant news event, reflecting their greater emphasis on national coverage. The afternoon papers were more likely to publish a local photograph, often a feature, as the largest picture on the page. One afternoon editor said he liked to publish one strong local picture and a smaller wire photograph on page one. For regional editions, the largest photographs should be from that region. Wire photographs are used when a national or international story is judged important enough to require a photograph, too, or when an especially strong photograph comes over the wire. The "B", or second, section of each paper is a local news section, and the photographs published there each day are virtually all local in origin. The editors' preference is always for strong photographs by members of the newspaper's staff.

When assignments are made, the picture editor knows which one is likely to produce the page one picture without seeing any photographs, a choice based on the significance and interest of the topic. This preliminary choice may change if a more important story breaks with pictures to "bump" the earlier one or, less likely, if the photographer's "take" shows nothing to merit publication on page one.

The photographer is usually the first one to look at the film and select the frames to print. Looking over each frame, the photographer is seeing if there are any "moments," those pictures that capture the event in a spontaneous gesture or expression. Finding that "moment"

is often the process of a group discussion, as the photographer seeks the advice of others working nearby in the photography department.

The editing process begins by looking at "situations" the photographer shot, those settings in which he or she made several exposures. Once one or more good situations are identified, the photographer examines each frame more carefully to see if there is a "moment" among them. These activities of choice involve, not simply picking the photographer's favorite picture, but taking the role of others who will see the final choice--other photographers, the editors, the newspaper's readers. The criteria discussed and applied to the photographs during these "editorial moments" (Becker, 1982, pp. 198-208) reflect the photographer's concern for what the completed work will communicate to others.

These editorial moments also become a way of learning one's co-workers' opinions. A photographer from a "neighbors" bureau whose work had rarely appeared in the metropolitan editions, was eager to get the advice of the "downtown" photographers in editing the film he had shot of a major fire. He thought he had page one pictures, but was not sure which he should take to the editor. In another case, a photographer printed more pictures than she ordinarily would to show to a new picture editor. His reactions to her work on the assignment would help her learn his preferences and expectations. Editing becomes, as in these two examples, a way of socializing new or less experienced staff members into the newspaper's pattern of work.

As they select the frames to print, the photographers are anticipating potential responses from their professional colleagues and their readers. They look for frames that will "read well," that is, are simple enough in their composition and have enough contrast to be easily inter-

preted when published on newsprint. They look for frames that don't have any striking visual elements that would detract from the primary subject of the photograph, such as an intruding elbow of a starkly striped shirt, or confusing "clutter" in the background. They consider how large the photographs will have to be to "read well." They look carefully at faces in each frame, trying to eliminate those that have people looking at the camera or with their eyes closed. They look for interesting patterns of shapes and lines that will make good graphics. If there is a story on the subject, they look for a frame that will show something emphasized in the text. They look for frames that can be cropped into more interesting, less common proportions, that would be effective as a long horizontal or narrow vertical picture. They consider the quality of the negative, and how difficult it will be to get a print with the right contrast for the newspaper's reproduction. And they look for something a little bit unusual that they would not expect to see in the competing wire service photographs or other newspapers. They consider whether the "take" is strong enough to include pictures that would work together, as a "two-picture combo" or a layout for a picture page. These considerations represent the dialogue that takes place as the photographer looks for the photographs that not only fit the conventions of the newspaper, but also will be innovative and creative.

Photographers usually pick one to three frames to present to the editor, and may print the one they consider the strongest larger than the rest, to give it greater impact. At the picture desk, the editor looks over the photographer's contact sheet and prints. Portions of the dialogue that occurred in the photography department are repeated, as the photographer summarizes the event, and gives the editor reasons

for selecting the prints before them. The editor usually offers a brief evaluation of the photographer's coverage of the assignment. When an editor thought one photographer should have shot more, he asked "Economizing on film again?" to criticize the photographer's pattern of undershooting. Another editor commented when a photographer had shot eight rolls on one assignment that she must not have gotten what she was looking for, and the photographer agreed.

The editor makes his or her own choice and takes them, together with any wire photographs to the meeting where editors plan the news budget for the next edition of the paper. Picture editors develop strategies for presenting their selections at these meetings. One editor, for example, presents the best photograph first if it is clearly outstanding; when she considers none of them particularly strong, she puts the best on the bottom of her pile to lead up to in the meeting. The editor will give the photographer's name as each print is shown, and repeat in a more abbreviated form the reasons for publishing these particular photographs. The picture editor will also suggest specific prints for page one, and usually, the size these need to be run to be effective. As later assignments come in, these choices may be changed, and later editions of the paper often have quite a different set of photographs--color where there had been black and white, or a later photograph of an event that was still in progress when the street edition went to press.

The picture editor is responsible for writing the cutlines, using the information the photographer provides, and for identifying the photographer so the correct credit line can be set. The picture desk is also where the photographs are sized and cropped to fit the spaces in the

newspaper dummy left open for pictures. The editor is also the one who designs and lays out a picture page, if there is one. He or she may also do some spotting or retouching of prints judged to need extra work in order to reproduce well. The editor then goes through each edition of the paper as it arrives in the newsroom, to evaluate the pictures and how they were used, to catch any errors and correct them for the next edition, and to get ideas for additional photographic assignments.

Calling Errors

The complexity of the interrelated activities of making, photographing, and editing daily assignments is made smoother by the routines photographers and editors follow as they work. The cooperative character of many of their tasks creates a framework for mutually constructing evaluations of the work they do, both as individuals and collectively. Thus, when mistakes occur, as they inevitably do, since no human work process can be comprehensively routinized, the errors are accounted for and resolved through individual and collective activity. Different kinds of errors, with different causes, are interpreted and resolved by the staff using a variety of strategies.

Errors in coordination of duties and information create disjunctions in the web of cooperation that would otherwise allow the work to be done smoothly. An assignment that took a photographer across town to photograph a dog "arrested" for biting a child turned out to be based on incomplete information from the reporter assigned to the story: the dog was not at the kennel that day, but at the veterinarian's. A second photographer was sent to the vet's office, while a third photographer took time from another assignment to make a portrait of the dog's owner. The completed assignment appeared on the front page of the paper, but

the necessary work had required adjustments in the schedules of several people, and the picture editor was not pleased with the results. In another case, a photographer had not taken adequate pictures of a policeman central to a reporter's story ("He was only writing tickets"), so a second photographer on a football assignment was asked to locate the policeman on duty at the game and make a portrait to run with the story. A photographer's rampant misspelling in his cutline information cued the editor to check the spelling of the source's name. Two phone calls later, she had the correct spelling. When the picture desk learned of an important event a mere half an hour before it began, the editor and photographer did not have adequate time to prepare well for the work. Each of these errors, involving incorrect information or problems of coordination, could be resolved with extra time and effort. They created frustrations and shortened the tempers of those who took the responsibility of resolving them. But the photographers and editors learn to expect these kinds of errors, as part of the overriding routine of some "bad days."

More problematic for the activities of the picture desk and photography department are occurrences which are interpreted as errors in judgment. These are not errors in the sense that they can be caught and corrected, but have consequences on the quality of the final product of the work. Such errors then reflect back into the web of collective activity, creating antagonism and distrust among the staff. Replacing strong photographs with those of a less newsworthy event to run on the front page, or a decision not to use a photograph of an event the photographer judged significant are examples of decisions considered by some members of the staff to be judgment errors.

A decision to publish a color photograph of a parade on page one instead of photographs of the local racial disturbance that ran on inside pages was the editors' sense of the newspaper's responsibility to the community that had criticized the paper for sensationalizing coverage of a previous riot. Several staff photographers considered this an error in news judgment that prevented adequate publication of their best, most significant work.

The photographer who received an assignment he considered trivial, of a sports event, believed that he was missing out on opportunities to photograph more significant subjects that the picture editor was either unaware of or chose not to cover. While this occurrence did not interrupt the routine flow of activity, the photographer perceived it as a case of the editor's judgment error.

When errors of coordination and information are seen, not as isolated mistakes, but as an emerging pattern of activity, such errors are often reinterpreted by the participants as judgment errors. A photographer who submitted incomplete and incorrect cutline information several times was considered by the editor to be paying insufficient attention to an important aspect of his job: his apparent lack of concern over the accuracy of the information he gathered on assignments was viewed by the editor as a pattern, and each subsequent occurrence was then seen as a judgment error. When the city desk failed to inform the picture desk of an important local funeral, a photographer and picture editor recalled other recent instances when the city editor had not anticipated which stories had good picture possibilities. They thus perceived a pattern in the activity of the city desk that reflected a lack of concern for the significance of good photographic coverage, a pattern they

saw as showing errors in judgment rather than simple oversight. Photographers who receive several bad assignments in a row and are doing what they consider to be more than their share of assignments begin to think their skills are being misused by their respective editors. They see their work as getting weaker or less interesting because their editor is using poor judgment in assigning them. An incorrect or omitted credit line is usually considered an annoying mistake, a case of poor coordination or misinformation. However, when a credit line was omitted from an important picture page, a front page photograph was credited to the wrong person, and two inside pictures had the credit lines reversed, the picture editors and photographers saw a pattern that could not adequately be accounted for by the time pressures of working on deadline. The city desk, responsible for these errors of information and omission, was seen, in a much broader sense, as giving insufficient credit to the role of photographers on the newspaper and the quality of coverage they provided.

Conclusions: Advocating for Pictures

Errors of both kinds--those involving misinformation and miscoordination and those attributed to fallacies in judgment--were experienced on all three newspapers in this sample. They can thus also be expected to occur on newspapers of less stature, with a less respected staff. Photographers and picture editors approach such errors, like other facets of their work, in ways that become routine. Just as a picture editor develops a strategy for presenting pictures for consideration in budget meetings with other editors, she works out patterned ways of letting other editors know that they are using poor judgment in their treatment of photographers and their work. Just as a photographer develops a routine

for entering a situation to take pictures, she establishes strategies for letting a picture editor know that she thinks he is not publishing her most newsworthy work. To call a coordinated pattern of interaction a "routine" does not mean it is without conflict or dissension between its participants. Rather, it is an expected facet of the job, a type or quality of interaction that participants expect to occur periodically, as part of the process of work.

Thus we can see, woven through the established conventions of carrying out daily assignments, strategies photographers and picture editors have for identifying and drawing attention to errors that prevent photographs from being used to the best advantage of those who make and edit them, and also, to the benefit of the newspapers' readers. Picture editors refer to these strategies as part of the job of "advocating for pictures," that is, working to develop an atmosphere in which photographs and the people who make them are used well, and are awarded a respected and intrinsic position within the process of good journalism. The advocacy role of the picture desk and photography department rests on the belief that photography is a poorly understood yet powerful means of communication. Picture editors and photojournalists, as part of their jobs, should expect, according to this belief, to serve as articulate interpreters and talented practitioners of their medium. They must show other editors, those referred to as "the word people," what makes a good photographic assignment. They must argue for "space" for pictures. They must be willing to explain why a photograph is good and important for readers to see. They must insist that staff photographers be recognized as journalists, reporters who use cameras. They can expect this advocacy to take place, in various ways, on a daily basis, between photographers,

between picture editors and photographers, and between picture editors and other newsroom staff, editors, and management. They come to think of "advocating for pictures" as what they do when they create assignments, shoot photographs, choose the right frames to print, get the space to publish those prints well, catch errors of information, combat errors of attitude and judgment, and unfold the newspaper each day to look at and evaluate the pictures their collective actions have produced for readers to see.

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